



Afternoon Alert - Monday, April 10, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that National Security Advisor McMaster said Russia should review its relations with the Assad regime. TBS led with a report on the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Italy, saying that the main topic will be Syria. The network highlighted Secretary Tillerson's televised remark that the priority in Syria is to defeat ISIS, not the Assad regime. Other top news included reports that Secretary Tillerson said on a TV program that the U.S. military strike on Syria was also meant to send a message to North Korea.

INTERNATIONAL

National Security Adviser McMaster urges Russia to review its relations with Syria

NHK reported at noon that National Security Adviser McMaster appeared on a FOX TV program on Sunday and said that a "political solution" is needed in Syria and pointed out that U.S. Ambassador to UN Haley said it would be difficult for the Assad regime to continue. He also reportedly said the U.S. will not bring about changes in the Syrian government and suggested that Russia should review its relations with the Assad regime. He was quoted as saying: "Russia should ask itself why it is supporting the Assad regime that is committing the mass murder of its own population." Meanwhile, the network reported that Secretary of State Tillerson said on the same day that the priority in Syria is to defeat ISIS, not the Assad regime. He said: "The real failure here is Russia's failure to live up to its commitments under the chemical weapons agreement, to play the role in Syria of securing

chemical weapons and destroying chemical weapons." The network added that attention will be focused on Secretary Tillerson's first visit to Russia this week.

Scholars discuss U.S. missile attack on Syria, U.S.-China summit

NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show aired a discussion by five experts on the U.S. missile attack on Syria. Former Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka said it will be necessary to closely watch what steps the United States will take next, saying that the Trump administration's unexpected shift from the "America First" domestic-oriented policy to such decisive involvement in Syria came as a shock to him and made him nervous about unpredictability in the Trump administration's decision-making process. However, Yabunaka welcomed Prime Minister Abe's expression of Japan's support for the resolve of the United States, saying that it made sense for Japan to make such a move as an ally of the U.S. The former diplomat added that Abe's teleconference with President Trump on Sunday was useful for maintaining close coordination between Washington and Tokyo.

Takushoku University Professor Takashi Kawakami said that the U.S. action sent a message to China and North Korea. Hosei University Professor Nobuo Shimotomai speculated that President Putin must have been shocked by the U.S. strike because he was preparing to discuss cooperation with the U.S. in responding to ISIL and other terrorist groups. Speculating that relations between Washington and Moscow will become increasingly complicated following the U.S. attack, the scholar conjectured that Secretary of State Tillerson, who has strong connections with Russia, holds the key to improving ties between Washington and Moscow. National Defense Academy President Ryosei Kokubun said it is certain that the U.S. missile attack on Syria sent a strong warning to China and North Korea. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Professor Hiroyuki Aoyama stressed that it is necessary to carefully determine whether the Assad regime actually used chemical weapons because no concrete evidence has been presented yet. However, Yabunaka commented that discussions should be focused on how to end the prolonged internal conflict in Syria.

In a separate discussion on U.S.-China relations with experts on China, Yabunaka and other panelists shared the view that at last week's U.S.-China summit no tangible progress was made on how to respond to North Korea.

Suga welcomes USG's stance toward North Korea

NHK reported this afternoon that in relation to Secretary of State Tillerson's remark that the U.S. military action against Syria was also meant to keep North Korea in check, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga welcomed the USG's stance of not ruling out the use of force against the reclusive state. Suga was quoted as saying at a press briefing this morning: "I would like to refrain from commenting on this on behalf of the government since it is a matter that is under consideration by the U.S. government, but Japan welcomes the U.S. stance that all options are on the table." On the disclosure by the U.S. military that the USS Carl Vinson Strike Group was redirected to the Western Pacific, Suga reportedly said the GOJ was not aware of the move. He also said: "It is important to

ensure U.S. deterrence amid the increasingly severe regional security situation. We hope to further boost the deterrence of the U.S.-Japan alliance."

- [Kishida, Tillerson set to meet on Syria conflict, N. Korea threat](#) (Kyodo News)
- [State Department officials "left out of the loop" in planning Syria attack](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe may have Syria dilemma](#) (The Japan News)
- [Abe's nod to US 'determination' may aim to rattle Pyongyang](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Ruling, opposition parties carefully watching U.S. Syrian airstrikes' impact on Japanese security](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Security tightened for U.S. facilities in Japan after Syria attack](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Trump's order for military action shows determination to intervene in Syria](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Full-scale efforts needed to end Syrian crisis](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: U.S. sabre-rattling](#) (Asahi)
- [Cartoon: U.S. leader attacks Assad, regional leaders react](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Xi Jinping's goal eludes him in the US](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Analysis: Economic dialogue a test for Abe's strategy toward Trump administration](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan wary of economic dialogue centering on trade deficits](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Chinese premier to meet Japanese business delegation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Delinking different elements in Japan-U.S. ties](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Trump's abrasive language expresses underlying American sentiment](#) (Bungeishunju)
- [Japanese, Brazilian business leaders call for stronger economic ties](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Sri Lanka PM to visit Japan for summit with Abe](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Unethical Japan-Israel investment pact may come under int'l fire](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abandoning the façade of non-nuclear Japan](#) (Seiron)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 8](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on April 7](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP encourages Nagashima to join the party](#) (Mainichi)
- [Rengo endorses 28 candidates from DP, Tomin First](#) (Mainichi)
- [Tokyo governor's party to endorse DP defectors in assembly election](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Legal loophole may result in confidential documents being discarded](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Anti-conspiracy bill adds to public concern over government](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Commentary: Trump doles out Mideast medicine without a license](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan, ASEAN to speed up talks on RCEP](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SECURITY

- [Japan testing reaction on strike capability against N. Korea threat](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Nuclear sniffer aircraft arrives at Kadena Air Base for possible DPRK nuclear test](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Japan adopts plan to protect interests on inhabited offshore islands](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Preserve remote island populations to safeguard the nation's territory](#) (The Japan News)

ECONOMY

- [Revised law enables surprise inspection of nuclear plants](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Toshiba planning to sell TV business](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [ANA to procure 4 jets from Boeing as replacement for MRJs](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Can Japan-France nuclear cooperation bolster human resources, technologies?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Fintech spurs rebound in finance job hopping](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan, China, South Korea compete over Kuala Lumpur-Singapore high-speed rail project](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Renesas unveils autonomous vehicle that can protect itself from cyberattacks](#) (The Japan Times)

SCIENCE

- [Mitsubishi Electric aims sky-high with space business push](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japanese minirocket getting a second shot at life](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

Subsurface ground poses risk in earthquakes

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported that almost one year has passed since a series of powerful earthquakes hit Mashiki, Kumamoto. Experts have found through the latest analysis technology that the areas where most of the housing collapsed had a soft layer of clay underground. This clay layer is believed to be the reason for the devastating damage caused by the earthquakes, and many local municipalities across Japan are reviewing the risk of soft subsurface ground.

Shirahama zoo sets example in breeding giant pandas

Saturday's "NHK Special" reported on a zoo in Shirahama, Wakayama, which has developed a unique breeding program for giant pandas. Instead of following the global practice of immediately separating the cub from the mother, the facility allows the mother to care for the cub to the extent possible. As a result, the zoo has successfully bred many pandas in recent years, and China and other nations are following its example. The program also featured a father panda named Eimei, who is more than 70 in human years.

EDUCATION

- [Higher education keeps overreaching](#) (The Japan Times)

- [Parental allowances for private college kids hit new record low](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [Japan acts to enforce TITP reforms to prevent exploitation of foreign trainees](#) (The Japan Times)
 - [Japan ranks lowest in number of female researchers publishing academic papers](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
-

